

### REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated July 12, 2007. Claims 1 to 15 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1, 11, 14 and 15 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claims 1 to 4, 9, 11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Published Appln. No. 2001/0046065 (Furukawa) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,309,558 (Rourke). Claims 5 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Furukawa in view of Rourke, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,134,568 (Tonkin). Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Furukawa in view of Rourke, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,550,997 (Ip). Claims 7, 12, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Furukawa in view of Rourke, and in further view of U.S. Published Appln. No. 2002/0101604 (Mima). Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Furukawa in view of Rourke, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 5,331,442 (Sorimachi). Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns a printing control apparatus which performs a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices using a printing job that utilizes a specified process flow wherein the components of a process flow are presented to the user. The process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user; and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in a device combination that capable of executing a printing job. Such a characteristic feature allows a user who has instructed the printing job to confirm or understand what processes are to be performed to execute the printing job and whether or not the printing devices or the user should handle specific processes required to complete the printing job. Therefore, the user can effectively handle the printing job.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to a printing control apparatus which performs a printing process employing a plurality of printing devices. The apparatus includes printing attribute acquisition means for acquiring an attribute of a printing job to be processed; adaptive environment determination means for obtaining device combinations capable of executing the printing job based on performance information representing at least performance of each of the plurality of printing devices and the acquired attribute of the printing job; and process flow presentation means for presenting a process flow required to execute the printing job. The process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in the device combinations obtained by the adaptive environment determination means.

In the Office Action, it is admitted that Furukawa does not disclose or suggest presentation of a process flow as featured in Claim 1. In regard to this feature, the Office Action contends that Rourke discloses a presentation of a process flow. Specifically, the Office Action contends that Rourke discloses, in Fig. 7, Job Ticket 150 and Job Scorecard 152 displayed on touchscreen 62 wherein Job Ticket 150 displays various job selections programmed for the job being programmed.

However, Applicant respectfully submits that Job Ticket 150 and its related display do not correspond to presenting a process flow required to execute the printing job, wherein the process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in the device combinations as featured in Claim 1. Specifically, Applicant submits that Job Ticket 150 of Rourke and its related display only displays job selections programmed for a system and lacks work procedures that the user is required to do in order to execute the printing job. This is because the jobs

handled by the system of Rourke do not require any work procedures that require user performed procedures. Therefore, Rourke does not disclose a process flow including both (1) work procedures to be performed by a user and (2) process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in a device combination that are capable of executing a printing job.

Applicant has reviewed the remaining references, namely Tonkin, Ip, Mima and Sorimachi, and submits that none of these remaining references disclose or suggest a process flow or its presentation as featured in the present invention.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that Furukawa, Rourke, Tonkin, Ip, Mima and Sorimachi, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of the printing control apparatus of Claim 1. Specifically, the cited references, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest presenting a process flow required to execute the printing job, wherein the process flow includes work procedures to be performed by a user and process procedures to be performed by respective printing devices included in the device combinations obtained by an adaptive environment determination means.

In light of the deficiencies of Furukawa, Rourke, Tonkin, Ip, Mima and Sorimachi as discussed above, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Amended independent Claims 11, 14 and 15 are directed to a method, a computer-readable medium, and a computer program product, respectively, substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claims 11, 14 and 15 are also now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons.

Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

CONCLUSION

No claim fees are believed due; however, should it be determined that additional claim fees are required, the Director is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account 50-3939.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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